

FREDERICTON BRIDGE

A PROPHECIC WARNING,

—BY—

M. H. PENGILLY.

LOWELL, MASS.
MONITOR & MAN JOE PAINT.
1896.





FREDERICTON BRIDGE

A PROPHETIC WARNING,

— BY —

M. H. PENGILLY.

LOWELL, MASS.
MONITOR STEAM JOB PRINT.
1885.



PREFACE.

This book is respectfully dedicated to the people of Fredricton. The subject suggested itself to me on reading of the proposed bridge in the St. John papers brought to me by my son while imprisoned in the Provincial Lunatic Asylum.

W
C
A
O
A
A
H
W
T
T
S
S
A
R
W
A
V
H
A
C

❖ LINES ADDRESSED TO THE RIVER ❖
ON ITS LATE CLOSING.

What aileth thee gentle river
Canst thou not hush thy throbbings in this December
weather
As thou hast done in former years, where hast thou found
thy gathered tears?
One morning I arose from off my bed,
And lo a silver sheet was o'er thy bosom spread,
And gazing on thee, to myself I said,
How kind, gentle river, thus quietly to sleep,
While still thy murmuring waters underneath their vigils
keep
Thou knowest 'tis time to lay, boat oars and sails away,
That children should no longer, in thy chilling waters play.
Sleep on; sleep on, till April's gentle falling rain
Shall wake thee into life again,
Another morn I wake, and yet again I say,
River what aileth thee
Why hast thou thrust thy coverings all away,
Art thou like the bewildered buds and flowers
Who dreaming Springtime had returned again
Have wasted so much sweetness on the Autumn hours,
And found too late, all had been spent in vain.
Or has some visiting angel whispered thee,

Of desolated homes, of burning cities and their sad results,
 Of delicate women, helpless babes, and feeble aged men,
 Who once on soft luxurious couch reposed,
 Now rest their aching limbs on pallets hard
 While but mean shelter covers their defenceless heads
 Or have these whisperings been, news from afar,
 Of the sad tidings from the eastern war,
 How Turkish brigands slaked their hated thirst,
 And on Bulgarians victims, who to them for succor fled,
 Commit such deeds of horror as my pen dare not portray ;
 Or did'st thou hear the cry go out, from Israelitish homes,
 Where Russian soldiers riot and destroy
 Where youth and age alike are driven,
 As frightened deer, chased through the forest wild,
 Hear'est thou the groans from aching hearts,
 Near Danubes shores, and Plevna's guarded walls,
 Where lives, by thousands numbered are laid down
 To pacify the insatiate gods of war.
 No wonder that thy bosom swells and dreams,
 And rise and fall with gathered tears from all thy little
 streams,
 Perhaps thou'st heard of desolations wrought
 By rivers in the far off West, and thinkest,
 That thou wilt not be outdone ; art gathering up thy forces
 Piling down a stock of sure destruction ; art thou saying
 To small towns and lowly valleys near thy banks,
 More terrible am I. in my might and strength, than even
 the fire fiend
 Perhaps thou hast heard, how, borne in Merchants ships
 Across the Western ocean, tons of the greatest curse on
 earth to man

Have come to fill the place of that which the fire fiend
might well destroy

And in thy wrath has said, I will hoard up my strength
And deep piled in, when Spring shall come,

With one tremendous crash, shall sweep their tons away,
Hush gentle river, knowest thou not, that when
The fire destroyed the cursed stock, the children's bread
went also,

And homes and hearths in one huge funerael pyre left all
so desolate.

E're yet my musings cease, cold John of old
Has drawn his silver sheet across thy breast,
And his north winds are whispering, come forth now
Ringing sleigh-bells, gay young hearts and merry laugh-
ing voices,

With glittering steel and nimbly gliding feet, I will my-
self insure

Your bridge, and road, and rink, and all secure,
So good night sleeping river, and good bye till Spring-
time comes again

And then may all the hearts of thy huge crystal cakes
By rays of noonday sun be softened quite away,
And gently, softly glide out to their ocean graves.

WRITTEN, FREDRICKTON, DEC., 10, 1877,
Year of the Fire.

IN the year 1877 having lost my home by fire, I spent the remainder of the Summer and Autumn in Fredricton. The home of my friends with whom I boarded was near the bank of the river "St. John," and my attention particularly drawn to the manner in which it was getting settled down to its Winter sleep. In the morning it would be covered with ice formed during the night, and by noon swept farther down by the rains falling at its head, and at its many tributaries. We discuss the subject and come to the conclusion that by all appearances and from the experiences of former years, there would be a great ice jam in the Spring, from there being such a body of water, forming so much ice, and stowing down like a reserve force that will carry all before it in the Spring, if the rains should fall and raise the water before the ice should be weakened by the sunshine and warm winds of Springtime. (A few dry winds came just in time to save the city that season.) The water ceased to rise and the ice moved gradually away, keeping within the river bounds. I being more nervous than usual by my fire escapade, my nights were made more sleepless while thinking of the river and as Spring approached I dared not stay so near its banks.

I would not run the risk of being washed away from a refuge to which I had been so lately driven by the fire. I went to the house of a friend five miles above the city. Its elevated position enabled us to see the ice, night and day, (the moon being full). I watched it anxiously as it crowded and jammed itself along. It lodged just below the city and fears for its safety were entertained by

many, forgotten now I suppose in their desire for improvement and connecting railways. The water rose many feet above its usual height flowing into the yard of my friend, and when they told me of it on my return. I was very thankful that I had left for higher ground, for I should have had no sleep there. Although I knew I was safe on the hill, I left my bed many times to see if the ice was yet standing still, often fancying I could see it piling up over the banks of the doomed city, for whose safety and that of my friends there I felt more than anxious.

Ice and water is I am sure a more dangerous foe than fire, more rapid in its movements, more difficult to escape from, and against whose losses we are seldom insured. The proposed Bridge brings so forcibly to mind that time of dread and anxiety for the safety of Fredricton, that I cannot refrain from giving expression to my thought and feelings on the subject. If the people of Fredricton would consider this matter in a natural and impartial manner, they would not for the sake of money that would necessarily be expended at that time, run the risk of destroying the city by placing a bridge where, if built with sufficient strength to resist the force of the ice in ordinary seasons might in a time like the Spring of '78, hold the ice and assist in forming a dam that could not fail to flood the city, if it did not sweep it entirely away. How many cities and towns situated on low lands near river banks have been destroyed by an element so much beyond the control of feeble man. Why then should we thus lend our aid to so powerful an enemy as the water and ice would be, if the proposed bridge when completed

should hold the last stone required to make perfect the dam that should aid in the destruction of the city.

This has become so fast an age, the traveling and commercial world can scarcely wait for ferryboats and horses with which to exchange cars and stations. They must needs have bridges or wings. Time to them is so precious, so valuable. Is it of more value than human lives. Is it more essential to the prosperity of a country that railroads should be linked by bridges than that the safety of its cities should be considered. Will the few hours lost by such hindrances be missed at the end of lifes journey, I think not. Could not the traveling public be expedited in a less dangerous, less expensive manner. Would it not be better to expend one half the sum which would be required to build a bridge in adding boats and landings near the stations.

The exchanges would give added employment and so increase the population by drawing to us workers from other countries instead of allowing one to go west for lack of employment here.

The Bridge that will expedite travel and benefit few while under course of erection will carry the business more swiftly past the city and leave it quiet and lifeless as before. Will it be better to draw so heavily on our government funds for the sake of a year of prosperity, that will subside into added taxation and debt, when we may with much less expense secure quite sufficient by ferryboats leaving landings at short intervals.

Let us do all in our power to increase the prosperity of our cities that they may continue growing and with a new impetus equal to those of the far west, which have

been built up by a sacrifice to our Province, as they have attracted from us so many of our most enterprising young men.

Lack of public spirit and a proper protective policy that would encourage the establishment of various manufactories, has left us behind our Sister Provinces. This has in a measure been overcome by the "National Policy" of our honoured Minister of Finance which must eventually become one of the bulwarks of the Dominion.

Let us always strive for the right. Let us expend the public monies in such a manner as shall do the most good to the many.

Let it not be in any sense an individual matter, but such as will extend to our children's children, and shall add to our wealth and strength without exposing ourselves to the danger of being swept away by the resistless force and mighty power of the ice floating down in Springtime, when the late rains of Autumn may have added so much to its usual weight and quantity. What is the puny arm of man when trying to resist the power of God in the elements. 'Tis true he has brought to his aid the lightning from the sky and with it carries words and sounds across oceans and continents. In forming the Electric light he has been able to make brilliant the darkest night. He is daily using the breath of Heaven to waft his ships across the seas.

He forms channels through which to convey water and make it subservient to his purpose, from water he produces steam to move the mighty engine. the greatest work of the present day, and yet by those elements he is often and in various ways, swept out of existence in an

instant, and they who come after him are benefited by his wisdom or impoverished by his lack of judgement or economy.

I hope the people of my native county in the City of Fredricton may never have cause to regret that they have not taken heed to this my prophetic warning in regard to the Fredricton Bridge.



POEM.

Why am I thus a stranger,
So far from home ;
My life is yet in danger,
Where're I roam.

Why am I thus sought after,
'Tis not for love ;
Oh ! in the great hereafter,
I will freely rove.

What crime have I committed—
I ask of you ;
That I am not permitted,
My work to do.

My life is made complete ;
And my pen now
Shall save my weary feet,
Though age is on my brow.

Yes, that has proved my college,
That castle on the hill ;
In it I gained this knowledge,
To do my master's will.

My graduating lessons
Have cost me dear ;
But they have proved rich blessings
I will not fear.